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Impact fee decision not fair, balanced

In prior years our county commissioners were not only pro business but also pro community, factoring in all constituents' concerns. However, under the mantra of "jobs, jobs, jobs" the fair and balanced approach has been shunted.

It is ironic that the commission views proposed changes to impact fees to be positive, especially in the current environment. The wellbeing of the community is already suffering from cut backs in services due to public sector layoffs, the direct result of lower tax revenue.

Despite the slowdown in enrollment, the Board of Education's position that impact-fee monies are not needed at this time is incomprehensible. Perhaps these funds could reduce the number of forced staff cutbacks or be saved for future growth.

Also, an unemployed road worker might take issue with the road department's opinion that numerous improvements that have already been approved can be postponed.

I have yet to hear why foregoing impact fees will positively impact homeowners. As builders rightly point out, eliminating/reducing fees enables them to lower the price of newly constructed homes (without reducing profits). Just what I want; not! Additional inventory added to the historically high number of homes for sale can only reduce the value of my property.

The observation that foreclosed homes lower neighboring values substantiates my argument. No doubt the newly built, lower-priced home will sell before the "vacant" long-on-the-market residence next to mine.

I would be more sanguine if I were assured that the moratorium pertained solely to homes completed by a specific date. If a developer merely has to start construction but not finish, he can game the process by stockpiling exempted projects until better market conditions.

Commissioner Donna Hayes states that waving impact fees is not a matter of life and death. When next she runs, the commissioner might be reminded that sacrificing the quality of life does have a cost.

Richard Lundholm

Bradenton

Tax poll dubious

A headline in the Bradenton Herald stated that Floridians were in favor of a cigarette tax and also in favor of taxing services previously exempt. I believe 57 percent in favor was the percentage quoted. I did a little straw poll around the shop yesterday and out of eight persons present, two were smokers. Oddly enough 0 out of 8 were in favor of any additional taxes at all!

The people present are all blue-collar workers who basically are not political activists nor are they small business owners who would be adversely affected by additional taxes on trade services. I tried to be objective when I asked the questions.

So my question to you is: who were these 57 persons out of the hundred polled that thought what we need here in Florida are more taxes? Were they 100 non-smokers? Were they 100 persons who work in government who enjoy the benefits of a fat money chest? Were they persons vetted by the pollsters? Were the questions so buried in leading rhetoric the answer was predetermined? Or did someone just make up these numbers? I simply do not believe anyone who pays taxes would approve of more taxes right now.

Dennis Bessette

Bradenton

Sex education beneficial

I would like to join the chorus in favor of comprehensive sex education. I am curious why some people think that knowing the biological facts and understanding some of the emotional aspects of sexuality undermines abstinence.

If teenagers are well informed and have learned from responsible adults, girls especially are much more likely to resist the urging of their hormone-driven boy friends. Boys are likewise better able and possibly more willing to practice restraint if they have good information. They don't then have to learn by doing.

Both boys and girls need to be reminded of the social and personal costs of unplanned pregnancy. The average man is not happy to share in the financial support of an offspring born when he was a reckless teenager.

If the children have learned only from their peers, their decisions are not apt to be based on solid facts. They may be based on misinformation, or on out and out lies. With more knowledge both sexes will be better able to handle peer pressure. Additionally, those youngsters who choose to be sexually active will at least have the information to practice safer sex. I recommend we give the sex educators a chance.

Doris Sutliff

Bradenton

On Tiger and Jesus

Tiger Woods, Nike and Jesus Christ.

All of the above symbolize victory. Tiger is a golf legend in our time who often wears a cap with the Nike symbol.

The word "Nike" means "victory." I first discovered its meaning years ago while doing a word study of 1 John 5:4. In other verses, its word form nikao means "to conquer, overcome or prevail." In the game of golf, Tiger is the man who conquers the traps, hazards and reads the greens with excellence.

He has the heart, mind and work ethic of a champion who also inspires others to reach for their best.

Jesus Christ is also a victor. He never wore a Nike cap, but he always thought victory. He never drove a golf ball, but he drove evil out of people's lives. He never read a green, but was able to read people's lives and motives.

He never received any trophies or large paychecks. His greatest joy was not the applause of men but to conquer all of life's traps and hazards and thus live a perfect life and qualify as a sinless substitute for all of sinful mankind at the cross. His victory continued when he rose from the dead.

Those who believe and follow Jesus will also become overcomers.

Tiger Woods knows the joy of taking the victory walk up the 18th hole as the crowd applauds. Even more, Jesus Christ deserves our adulation as we remember his victory walk up the Via Dolorosa to the cross and ultimately his victorious ascension to the portals of heaven.

Nike to you.

John Beckerink

Bradenton

Proposal lacking

So, Mr. Robert Proper wants responses to his April 8 letter to the editor wherein he proposes to give \$500,000 to each citizen family as his way of getting out of our economic crisis. First, what is a "family?" Is it confined to a husband and wife and at least one child under the age of 18 or in college? If so, what about single parents, man or woman? What about single people, period? What about families whose incomes are high enough that they can afford to buy homes, pay mortgages and also buy cars? Should they also receive \$500,000? What about gay married couples? I'm sure there are many more examples but I've run out of them.

Taking the traditional view of family as a husband and a wife and a child or children, how many of those do we have in this country? Probably at least 150 million. Times that by \$500,000 comes to \$75 trillion. Where does the money come from? My response: It's a proposal not carefully thought out!

Norman Shaw

Lakewood Ranch

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